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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
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O 141345Z MAR 78
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1046
INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
USMISSION USUN
USMISSION USNATO
AMCONSUL ADANA
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
AMCONSUL IZMIR
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USEEC

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PEPR, MASS, TU, US, CY
SUBJ: TURKISH PRESS ON STRAINS IN US-TURKISH RELATIONS, MARCH 14

REF: ANKARA 1896

1. SUMMARY: TURKISH PRESS MARCH 14 CONTINUES TO REVEL IN A NEW ROUND OF AMERICA-BAITING. MOST PAPERS GIVE FRONT PAGE TREATMENT TO DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN HODDING CARTER'S
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MARCH 13 STATEMENT, BUT IT IS SECONDARY TO REPORTING OF ONGOING ECEVIT REACTION (PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF DEPARTMENT'S STATEMENT). ECEVIT RECEIVING WIDE SUPPORT. SEVERAL STORIES INDICATE THAT EMBROGLIO HAS FORCED TURKEY TO RECONSIDER TIMING OF SUBMISSION OF ITS CYPRUS PROPOSALS.
END SUMMARY

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2. BOTH THE PRESS AND RADIO CARRY CONTINUING REACTION TO VANCE STATEMENT AS LEAD STORY MARCH 14, HIGHLIGHTING PRIMIN ECEVIT'S ANSWERS TO REPORTERS' QUESTIONS AT AIRPORT ON HIS RETURN MARCH 13 (SEVERAL HOURS BEFORE DEPARTMENT'S CLARIFICATION WAS ISSUED). MOST PAPERS NOTE HIS RESPONSE TO QUESTION ABOUT CRITICISM THAT HIS ACTION WAS HASTY: "IN MY OPINION, THE AMERICAN BEHAVIOR IN QUESTION WAS VERY UNTIMELY. IF I HAD NOT REACTED TO THIS UNTIMELY CONDUCT, I BELIEVE I WOULD NOT HAVE DONE WHAT WAS NECESSARY FOR THE GOOD OF TURKEY." REGARDING A REASSESSMENT OF RELATIONS WITH NATO IN THE WAKE OF THE VANCE STATEMENT, THE PRIMIN IS WIDELY REPORTED AS SAYING, "IF THE AMERICAN BEHAVIOR IS BECOMING SUCH AS TO PREVENT OUR SOLVING THE CYPRUS PROBLEM AND IMPROVING RELATIONS BETWEEN TURKEY AND GREECE, CERTAINLY SOME IMPORTANT CONSEQUENCES WILL ARISE. WE ARE GOING TO FEEL THE NEED TO MAKE AN OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THESE CONSEQUENCES."

3. MOST PAPERS REPORT DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN HODDING CARTER'S REMARKS MADE DURING THE MARCH 13 PRESS BRIEFING. THESE STORIES EXPHASIZE HIS ASSERTION THAT THE SECRETARY'S STATEMENT WAS MISUNDERSTOOD. SPOKESMAN'S DECLARATION THAT THERE IS NO'LINKAGE' BETWEEN TURKEY'S CYPRUS PROPOSALS AND THE USG ATTITUDE TOWARD SUBMISSION OF THE DEFENSE COOPERATION AGREEMENT (DCA) TO CONGRESS IS WIDELY, BUT LESS PROMINENTLY, REPORTED. LEFTIST, OFTEN ANTI US CUMHURIYET
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ADDS THAT DIPLOMATIC SOURCES ARE SAYING APOLOGIES FROM THE US FOR THE MISUNDERSTANDING CAUSED BY THE VANCE STATEMENT WERE CONVEYED TO FONMIN OKCUN IN A STELEGRAM HE RECEIVED DURING THE MARCH 13COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING. BOTH CUMHURIYET AND ANKARA RADIO REPORT THAT TURKISH AMBASSADOR ESENBEL CALLED ON COUNSELOR NIMETZ AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY VEST ON MARCH 13. THE CUMHURIYET ACCOUNT ADDS THAT ESENBEL WAS ASSURED THAT THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION IS IN FAVOR OF THE LIFTING OF THE EMBARGO.

4. ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNS, ECEVIT IS RECEIVING PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR HIS OUTBURST AGAINST THE UNITED STATES. ON MARCH 13 THE NATIONAL UNITY GROUP (COMPOSED OF LIFE SENATORS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE 1960 COUP) ISSUED A PRESS RELEASE WHICH SAID, "WE WELCOME THE PRIMIN'S REACTION TO THE AMERICAN ATTITUDE ON THIS QUESTION AND REGARD HIS ACTION AS THE REQUIREMENT OF A DIGNIFIED FOREIGN POLICY." MASS APPEAL HURRIYET ADDS THAT AFTER A FOUR-HOUR SESSION CHAIRED BY ECEVIT, THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS ENDORSED THE PRIMIN'S ACTION.

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5. BOTH MILLIYET AND HURRIYET HAVE REPORTS THAT THE CURRENT STRAIN IN US-TURKISH RELATIONS MAY HAVE AN EFFECT ON CYPRUS NEGOTIATIONS. IN A STORY FROM MONTREUX, MILLIYET CORRESPONDENT MEHMET ALI BIRAND WRITES THAT A HIGH LEVEL MFA OFFICIAL TOLD HIM, "THE COMING MONTHS WILL BE CRITICAL FOR TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY." THE OFFICIAL REPORTEDLY ADDED THAT A DECISION HAS NOT YET BEEN MADE ON WHETHER THE INTERCOMMUNAL TALKS WILL BE CONVENED WITHIN THE ANTICIPATED SCHEDULE, AND HE HINTED THAT ACTION FROM
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THE TURKISH SIDE MAY BE DELAYED UNTIL THE USG MAKES A

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DEFINITE STATEMENT OF ITS INTENTIONS TOWARD THE DCA.
BIRAND INDICATES THAT THE GOT WILL CONSULT WITH THE
TURKISH CYPRIOT LEADERSHIP BEFORE MAKING ITS DECISION.

6. THE HURRIYET VERSION, WHICH QUOTES DIPLOMATIC QUARTERS
IN ANKARA, SAYS THAT THE VANCE REMARKS MAY HAVE SLOWED
THE PACE OF THE TURKISH INITIATIVE ON CYPRUS. OTHER
EFFECTS OF THE STATEMENT ALLEGEDLY INCLUDE:

--THE TIMING FOR SUBMISSION OF CYPRUS PROPOSALS HAS BEEN
IMPEDED, AND THE TURKS ARE AFRAID THAT THE GREEKS WILL
LEARN OF TURKISH CONCESSIONS BEFORE THE NEGOTIATIONS
BEGIN.

--THE STATEMENT CONFLICTED WITH A "TACIT AGREEMENT" THAT
THE UNITED STATES WOULD MAKE CLEAR ITS SUPPORT FOR LIFTING
THE EMBARGO BEFORE THE TURKISH PROPOSALS WERE ANNOUNCED.

-- THE STATEMENT RELIEVED THE PRESSURE ON GREEK PRIMIN
CARAMANLIS WHICH HAD FORCED HIM TO AGREE TO THE SUMMIT,
AND ECEVIT NOW IS CAST IN THE ROLE OF THE RIGID PARTY.

7. COMMENT: THE TURKISH PRESS IS HAVING A FIELD DAY WITH
THE ECEVIT OUTBURST. IN ADDITION TO EDITORIAL SUPPORT
FOR HIS STAND, SOME PAPERS HAVE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF THIS
OPPORTUNITY TO DUST OFF OLD ANTI-US ACCUSATIONS. MORE
HARSE THAN MOST, BUT INDICATIVE, IS THE FRONT PAGE HEADLINE USED BY
LARGE CIRCULATION, SENSATIONALIST GUNAYDIN, WHICH STATES, "ECEVIT
SAID, 'CAST NO SHADOW; I ASK NO MORE,' BUT THE USA IS NOT THE
SAHDOW, IT IS WITHIN US. 1) INSIDE THE NATIONAL
INTELLIGENCE ORGANIZATION. 2) INSIDE OUR POLICE FORCES.
3) INSIDE OUR NATIONAL DEFENSE SYSTEM. THROUGH CIA
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AGENTS DISGUISED AS DIPLOMATS, WASHINGTON HAS FOR YEARS
PLAYED WITH TURKEY'S DOMESTIC POLITICS."

8. WE NOTE ALSO IN DIRECT CONTACTS THAT MANY TURKS
STRONGLY SUPPORT ECEVIT'S ACTION, ALTHOUGH OPINION IN THE
FOREIGN MINISTRY SEEMS DIVIDED. ECEVIT'S REMARKS SEEM TO
ANSWER A WIDELY FELT PSYCHOLOGICAL NEED FOR SELF-ASSERTION
VIS-A-VIS THE US. IF ECEVIT WANTS TO CONTINUE IN THE
DIRECTION HE HAS STARTED, HE NO DOUBT WOULD HAVE POPULAR
SUPPORT.
SPIERS

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